

## LONG-TERM TAG RETURNS FROM JUVENILE KEMP'S RIDLEYS

Tagging efforts of juvenile kemp's ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys kempii*) sponsored by the U. S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Cooperative Marine Turtle Tagging Program (CMTTP) are providing important information regarding habitat utilization, migratory behavior, and age and growth. Four juvenile ridleys tagged in 1989/90 have been recaptured nesting at Rancho Nuevo, México. Three of the turtles were originally tagged on the east-central coast of Florida and the fourth was tagged further north in the Chesapeake Bay. These turtles ranged in size from 26-55 cm straight-line carapace length (notch-to-tip) and were free 5-8 years before nesting. All turtles were double flipper tagged and all had lost at least one of the original tags when recaptured.

Carr (1980) suggested that the juvenile ridley turtles found along the east coast of the U. S. may not be able to migrate back to Rancho Nuevo when mature, and may therefore be lost to the breeding population. As researchers slowly gathered more data on the juvenile ridleys of the Atlantic coastal habitats, it became apparent that these coastal waters were undoubtedly critical developmental habitat for a large portion of the Kemp's ridley population. Although researchers have been intuitively questioning the "lost waif" hypothesis, the theory continues to be perpetuated because of the lack of published scientific evidence (Caillouet et al., 1995; Musick and Limpus, 1997). These four tag returns, however, indicate that coastal juvenile ridley turtles are potentially viable breeders and are able to return to Rancho Nuevo.

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## PLASTIC "ROTOTAGS" MAY BE LINKED TO SEA TURTLE BYCATCH

Throughout the course of our investigations of black [Eastern Pacific Green] sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas agassizii*) ecology in Bahia de Los Angeles, Baja California, México we have had the opportunity to observe and learn about the interactions between sea turtles and fishing nets and to discuss these observations with local fishermen. Our findings suggest that plastic flipper tags (two-part "rototags" manufactured by Dalton Supplies, U.K.) used by the Gulf of California Black Sea Turtle Project over the past decade may contribute to sea turtle bycatch in a variety of fishing net types.